

Korean TV List

Drama Series	Rating	Year	Twitter Summary	Trailer	Content (WIP)	By
Alchemy of Souls	★★★★★	2022	Assassins! Mages! Biscuits! Monsters! Romance! Excrement!: One of the best k-dramas I've watched - a bit silly and wobbly in places but enormous fun with great characters, effects and huge sets, There's even a second series. It's set in a Joseon-like fantasy kingdom.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nRw1CGbFU0		The Hong Sisters
Vincenzo	★★★★★	2021	Excellent, reminds me of The Good Manager in that it's about fighting big corporations, only this time with a high body-count, torture, lots of guns, blackmail, and shameless product placement. A Korean-Italian mafia troubleshooter shoots trouble & looks pretty/cool	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S12-4mXCNj4		Park Jae Bum
Inspector Koo	★★★★★	2021	Now firmly in my Top 5 Korean dramas, possibly at number 1. It's very difficult to describe in one tweet: it's a rather unconventional and innovative detective series with a very women-dominated cast that avoids most k-drama stereotypes. Great music that's strangely Madchester	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mhb1pqq_v998		
Hometown Cha Cha Cha	★★★★★	2021	A kind but awkward & snobbish dentist ends up in a seaside village, meets casual jack-of-all-trades, and nothing much happens. Relatively low body-count. It's nice, funny, mostly cheerful and soppy. Ends with impressively forced Domino's Pizza ad. A romance themed romantic comedy.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z66fzyp3-M		
The Uncanny Counter	★★★★★	2020	Originally missed off this list because it's not a romcom, but if Very Serious 'The Tree With Deep Roots' has got on the list I can add a fun Buffy-like superheroes-fight-demons-and-corruption series. Also, like The Tree With Deep Roots, it has Ahn Suk-hwan!	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r55SRM6uhs		Yoo Seon Dong
Zombie Detective	★★★★★	2020	This knew exactly how daft it was & made a good job of it. Plot: full of holes. Detective: full of holes. Yet another evil vet, another CGI pig, boy band, an entire restaurant of tripe (literally), "Express Bus To Busan" & people hit with frying pans.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HyT5IODokIE		
Mystic Pop-up Bar	★★★★★	2020	Fun, cheerful double-romcom about death and regrets, ghosts, supermarkets, and one of the odd temporary bars that seem to be in every Korean TV series. Imagine a big budget Rentaghost reboot that dealt with things like miscarriages and fatal illnesses in a sensitive way	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pqOkAy0pI		
Diary of a School Nurse / School Nurse Files	★★★★★	2020	This is... very odd. A bit of rom, a bit com, huge amounts of slime, slime demons, teenagers, flesh tentacles, ghosts (slime), mass hysteria, supernatural dumb squid, and teachers. Only six episodes. A haunted school series focusing on the staff. A+	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SUUIXTZzhQI		
Mr Queen	★★★★★	2020	A smug promiscuous top chef (male) in 2020 ends up possessing the body of a late-Joseon era Queen. It's funny but there's possibly even more political intrigue than in a serious Joseon drama, & strong themes of how patriarchy turns women against each other. Some excellent acting, especially from Shin Hye-sun as The Queen's two personalities. Lots of cooking! Lots of eunuchs! Was one of top 5 most watched things on Netflix.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2-lkfGhJbw		
Rookie Historian Goo Hae-ryung	★★★★★	2019	Another Joseon romcom - rather funny at first, then more romantic, and then focuses on a constitutional crisis. Strong theme of women's rights, progress and anti-corruption. It's about honest, accurate historians but is quite anachronistic in places. Lots of likeable, almost Dickensian characters, and a very-Austen like female protagonist. We started calling the male lead "Sweet Prince Dootus". It often feels more like a Japanese 'Isekai', as the heroine is an educated, smart, very modern woman living in an almost medieval country, and being very smug about it at times. I want my own eunuch now.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=akqXm7xu18		
Crash Landing On You	★★★★★	2019	*The* Korean Romcom of recent years. Very wealthy woman accidentally ends up in North Korea, meets tall sensitive sad NK captain. Definitely one of the best so far, some surprisingly funny and sad bits, and a high body-count for a romcom, smart.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eXmJlXl2Vks		Park Ji-eun
The Good Manager	★★★★★	2017	A gangsters' accountant dreams of moving to Denmark but ends up an accidental hero to workers at a huge company. The entire series is about dramatic inter-departmental accountancy battles and it's really good. Really, Barely any romance. Excellent antagonist.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=712pgZUEshs		Park Jae Bum
The Tree With Deep Roots*	★★★★★	2011	Not a romcom, more a historical romtrag with fighting, betrayal, murders, scheming, linguistics research & Joseon big hats. Absolutely brilliant.Stars the actors for the Sad Gangster in Wok of Love & Sad Psychotherapist from Bride of Habaek	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=15ccZfV4zQE		
Cafe Minamdang	★★★★•	2022	"takes a deep breath" a group of disgraced police officers start a "sexy man cafe" that lets them run a fake shaman scam to catch a murderer, meet the sister of their dead friend who's now a vengeful super-cop and "then" it gets confusing. Somehow both grim and silly. The romance element is mostly sidelined after about 2/3 through. It uses the same twist as a number of other dramas on the list.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JookGdfFJg		
Extraordinary Attorney Woo	★★★★•	2022	A legal romcom centred on a new lawyer with a rare form of autism. Generally very good but that makes its flaws and contradictions stand out more. I disliked how one character was treated by the writers, otherwise it would get 5 stars. It has some lovely characters and manages to highlight social issues despite the law firm often representing the bad side of a dispute. Lots of whale facts.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MxqXEC2t-c		
Unlock My Boss	★★★★•	2022	An unemployed young man finds a lost phone containing the soul of a top tech CEO and agrees to take his place. Surprisingly serious, with great acting and characters, but somehow too predictable. Phone-in-toilet scene wins a 🍌 despite later claim there was a lack of "number two". Portrays self-driving cars as rubbish so may actually be more realistic than 'Startup'. Also features what looks like the same AR tech as 'Memories of the Alhambra' but wins twice as many stars.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PxF6n_2Wd7Y		
Hello, Me!	★★★★•	2021	A depressed 37-year-old is visited by her obnoxiously cheerful 17yo self & starts fixing her life. Lots of snacks. The main love-interest man is daft but Very Nice. Sweet, sad and funny, but ultimately about death like almost every other Korean romcom.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=717Z3aeXNhc		
Sell Your Haunted House	★★★★•	2021	A warm-hearted fake exorcist.comman with a dark past teams up with a cold, gothy estate agent with a dark past, who is actually a real exorcist haunted by her own mother. Unsurprisingly it's all about death, family, regrets (with occasional humour and SHAMELESS product placement) and is very sympathetic to the ghosts. There's also political corruption and gangsters, of course.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J-FwGvpMfK		
Startup	★★★★•	2020	An almost perfect example of a good Korean romcom, plus it has Python and Raspberry Pi vs Raspberry Pi drama. And lots of corndogs. It has a VC who is secretly nice so it's obviously a work of fiction. A good first k-drama.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BemKyzbLDDc		
The Fiery Priest	★★★★•	2019	Ex-special forces Catholic priest with PTSD because he accidentally blew up 11 children takes on a murderous cartel and corrupt police. Many similarities to Vincenzo (same writer) but much lighter & funnier. Huge buns, lots of poo, fights	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CnVUR9tQmj8		Park Jae Bum
Extraordinary You	★★★★•	2019	Teenagers at a very posh private school realise they aren't real, and are actually part of a romance comic. I thought this would be funny but is actually really rather sad and, once again, all about mortality. Apart from the running-joke continuity errors - the school uniform keeps changing.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a_1Tf3Rh6fE		
Hotel Del Luna	★★★★•	2019	A perfect modern hotel manager & a 400-year-old vengeful semi-ghost hotel owner have romantic squabbles & the occasional murder-attempt while running a hotel for ghosts. Lots of flashbacks to a previous romance. Quite sweet really but yet another sad series about death	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U3_1v8sB48		The Hong Sisters
Her Private Life	★★★★•	2019	Competent, skilled art gallery curator is also an obsessive stalker/fan of a younger k-pop star. Her new boss at the art gallery is a Very Serious Artist. Confusion & romance occur. It all sounds relatively dull but it's done very well: characters are good people, enemies reconcile rather than take revenge, positive portrayal of gay characters, and the underlying theme is shared motherhood, not death. Although it does have a death. Product placement for Canon cameras, the first K-drama product placement to work on me.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kw47Jqa8tqw		
Flower Crew: Joseon Marriage Agency	★★★★•	2019	A male trio of matchmakers/wedding organisers try to turn a poor young woman into a Proper Lady, like 'My Fair Lady/Pygmalion', but it's a Joseon drama so there's also some waterboarding, limb dislocation, murder, suicide, and lots and lots of treacherous scheming and fancy hats. It's still often very funny, good acting, great characters and some neat cinematography.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HqkNl_tXvzw		
Lawless Lawyer	★★★★•	2018	Not a romcom, it's an anti-establishment justice drama like The Good Manager, Fiery Priest, Vincenzo, etc. Full of familiar characters and scenes but enormous fun, despite some legal bits straining credibility. Lots of punching, gangsters & Subway food	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-VE_zkaWCCc		Park Jae Bum
Wok of Love	★★★★•	2018	The one with gangsters, Chinese restaurants, the sleazy horse, huge amounts of cooking.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jt_FCNQQt4		
Strong Girl Bong Soon	★★★★•	2017	Super-powered slacker game-designer wannabe heroine. Macho cop boyfriend vs arrogant game company millionaire boyfriend. Comedy gangsters! A creepy serial killer. Grandma's powerful excrement wine. Dad's walnuts. Theme tune! Terrible special effects at the end.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XLAIRGc7b8E		
Korean Odyssey	★★★★•	2017	What if the characters from 'Monkey' were modern celebrities, and Monkey wanted to eat Tripitaka (the heroine, a psychic estate agent)? With a nice, sad zombie, TV talent shows, ghosts, KPop Pigsy, a loveable moustached villain/bull god, lusty octopus god & much more. CGI pig. Terrible special effects at the end.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n2Y8EhEkDE		The Hong Sisters
Bring It On Ghost!	★★★★•	2016	Uni student teams up with nice ghost to punch bad ghosts for money. An evil vet! Nice drunken monk! Blatant homages to Scooby Doo. Quite sweet really.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YRIMsrRCRYw		
She Was Pretty	★★★★•	2015	The heroine ends up with a job at a fashion magazine but... lots of mistaken identity, childhood sweet-hearts, mysterious handsome but daft journalist things, drinking, more drinking, cow manure, bus stops.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Av_G2B8p6IA		
My Love from the Star	★★★★•	2013	A conceited actress & unsociable arrogant vulcan-like alien sociology lecturer fall in love, battle murderous CEO, bicker, use superpowers. Not bad, quite daft. The obligatory Sad Love Rival looks a bit like John Noakes.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AyQvUxCA9E		Park Ji-eun
Rooftop Prince	★★★★•	2012	Joseon-era prince's wife is murdered, he somehow travels to 2012 with his trusty eunuch, academic & swordsman sidekicks, and then there's comas, corporate intrigue, omelettes, and INTENSE nice sister vs evil sister sibling rivalry & hapless villain.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_V7zypaUb2c		
Bad and Crazy	★★★••	2022	Completed 'Bad and Crazy', a Bad Cop/Mad Cop series in which a corrupt anti-corruption detective has his life changed by a mysterious heroic weirdo. Sometimes funny, sometimes full of stabbings and cruel psychological manipulation. Minimal rom, adequate com. First half funnier and more fun than the second half	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1LOQKtR_bk		Yoo Seon Dong
The Silent Sea*	★★★••	2021	Not a romcom: there is no rom, there is no com. There is a spooky abandoned moon base, murders, and water. Surprisingly good, especially if you like shouting "No! Why would you do that?" while people in space make bad decisions. Unusual deaths, weak ending.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Af_Hj0MDBBQ		
Was It Love?	★★★••	2020	A romcom but unusual: female protagonist ends up w/ 4 men in love with her but spends the first 6 hours or so telling them to let her get on with her work & raising her daughter because life is complicated enough. Who is the father? A nice gangster is in this one too.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LYGJhJ_171A		
Clean With Passion For Now	★★★••	2018	Scruffy* working class woman & the posh, rude, mentally ill boss of a cleaning company fall in love & communicate very badly. Good at first, handles social issues/topics quite well but then deflates. Too much kissing. * Only in K-drama context	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CvYwAZZ8v9g		
Bride of Habaek	★★★••	2017	Sulky naked useless god meets sad, bad psychiatrist, then the usual mix of shouting and pouting occurs. Pretty good but the entertaining 'com' fades away, leaving 'rom' that is mostly awkward slurpy kissing and arguments. CGI pig.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UR4p1cl5mrv		
W – Two Worlds Apart	★★★••	2016	A surgeon falls in love with the smug fictional-but-real hero of her dad's comic. Lots of parallel worlds, time travel, and strategic use of It Was All A Dream. Cursed Cintiq tablets. Another one that gets grimmer as it goes on until it's yet another romcom about death. Imagine that Aha 'Take On Me' video with murders, taking a full day to watch.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V1NKHEFZ4c		
Warm and Cosy	★★★••	2015	Remarkably not that weird for something by The Hong Sisters - woman moves to an island and romantically bickers with a spoiled playboy chef and the nice mayor, plus there's romance between a diver and property developer, with a bit of Mysterious Death In The Past, lots of background BLOOP sound effects and cooking.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IpbAuUdZ0fE		The Hong Sisters
My Girlfriend Is a Gumiho	★★★••	2010	Spoiled rich drama student unwillingly ends up living with daft cutesy ancient fox-spirit/young woman hungry for meat. There's a supernatural scheming vet. It's rather cheap & cheesy and doesn't take itself seriously but is often fun, except for the final 3 hours which become confusing and melodramatic. CGI Pig. Moral: don't drink poison when someone says "drink this poison"	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Lcy3XUDD_a		The Hong Sisters
Memories of the Alhambra	★★•••	2018	It's about Augmented Reality, has an interesting idea, good acting, but both male and female lead characters are just so irritating we spent too much time groaning, facepalming and hoping the bad guys kill them. Might continue later. Update: I finished watching it while ill, nothing improved and it never made sense. If anything it got worse.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Lcy3XUDD_a		
Cinderella and the Four Knights	★★•••	2016	Honest, hardworking girl who has memorised The Art Of War ends up living with three spoiled rich young men. I'm still not sure who the fourth Knight was. Too predictable and cliched. The female lead starts off quirky & brave & independent then just goes soppy/floppy. Everyone behaves badly but is secretly nice, or is just nice. Still watchable, but it would have been better if the heroine ran off with her apparent rival instead of picking one of the men. Grumpy grandad, and an Evil Sister.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VWjXj3DSJk		
The Sound of My Heart	•••••	2016	A comedy about a web cartoonist's rise to fame. Very funny, possibly too much toilet humour. Or just too much toilet. We've not finished this one, maybe because of all the toilets, but I should try it again when I'm not eating dinner.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dhy-5Cq5r3c		
Oh my Ghost!	•••••	2015	A sexually frustrated ghost that possesses a shy junior chef and makes her harass her employer but we foolishly started watching the Korean and Thai versions at the same time and got very confused - don't do that.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dhy-5Cq5r3c		

Backlog

Drama Series	Status	
Strongest Deliveryman	PAUSED	Most dramatic, packed opening episode of any so far but then all characters become unlikeable
The Kings Affection	PAUSED	A lighthearted role-swap Joseon period drama and OH NO. OH.
Under The Queen's Umbrella	PAUSED	Wives and concubines scheme and compete to make one of their sons the next king
Tomorrow	PAUSED	A shabby supernatural team (plus nice guy in coma) try to prevent suicides QUITE GRIM

Notes

1	Not including the generic depression/anger/guilt/trauma used so often in drama, especially "man seems obnoxious but there is a reason and I can fix him" trope or "PTSD/guilt has made me a violent antihero" cliché
2	Not cliché hacker stuff where a hacker uses magical powers to deus-ex the plot. Absolutely not 'Memories of the Alhambra'
3	Almost every k-drama has some darkness/tragedy in the plot, even in the comedies: suicide, childhood trauma and family tragedy are especially common

Content Key (WIP)

Icon	Content
	Poop, lots of poop
	There's a wild boar, probably chasing someone
	The big theme is mortality
	Joseon period drama, or flashbacks: lots of hats
	Martial arts or general fighting
	Cheesy and it knows it
	Ham star: probably Ahn Suk-hwan or Kim Won-hae
	Gangsters, maybe with a heart of gold after all. Or not.
	Ghost, demons, and other supernatural creatures
	Science fiction, time travel, alternative worlds
	Fighting corruption
	Evil Sister
	Look it's that same tree again!
	Yakhyeon Cathedral again!
	Neurodiversity and mental health themes [1]
	Gay characters portrayed in a good way
	Sweet Prince Dootus
	Computer nerd fan service [2]
	Dark or sad ending [3]
	Chef Protagonist
	Someone's in a coma, maybe

Disclaimer: I don't speak Korean, I'm a not an expert in East-Asian media, I'm just someone who enjoys watching k-dramas on Netflix and made this list because I'm a nerd and it saves time when encouraging other people to try some k-dramas.